

ISB Briefing Paper on the State Interoperability Executive Committee: Progress Report, Appointment of New Member, Spectrum Coalition

Prepared by Dennis Hausman, DIS/MOSTD (360) 902-3463.

Description

The State Interoperability Executive Committee (SIEC) will report on the SIEC Inventory that was submitted to the Legislature in December 2003 and on the next deliverable, an interim statewide communications plan. The SIEC will also seek the appointment of a new member to the Committee, and ask for the ISB's endorsement and recommendation to the state legislature for a non-binding joint resolution in support of the Spectrum Coalition.

Recommendation to the Board

- Staff recommends the appointment of Commissioner Mike Doherty (Clallam County) to represent the Washington State Association of Counties.
- Staff recommends the appointment of Chief Lowell Porter of the Washington State Patrol to fill the vacancy left when Chief Serpas resigned his position.
- Staff recommends that the ISB support the SIEC joining the Spectrum Coalition, with a recommendation to the Legislature that they support a non-binding joint resolution in support of the Coalition. With the ISB's approval of this item, staff will (through DIS) also make the Washington Congressional Delegation aware of the support of the Spectrum Coalition and ask that the delegation support the actions of this group.
- Since the last SIEC meeting, the Chair, Chief Ronal Serpas has resigned from his position at the Washington State Patrol and has moved to Nashville. As a result, the Chair of the ISB will be asked to appoint a new Chair of the SIEC.

Status

The SIEC is required in its enabling legislation to:

- Inventory state government-operated public safety communications systems by December 31, 2003; this inventory was accomplished on time.
- Develop an interim statewide public safety communications plan by March 31, 2004; in progress. (The SIEC will provide a copy to the ISB for its review.)
- Inventory all public safety communications systems in the state by July 31, 2004; in progress.
- Develop a final statewide public safety communications plan by December 31, 2004; not yet started.

During the December 11, 2003 SIEC meeting the membership was briefed on the work of the Spectrum Coalition. The SIEC voted unanimously to join the Spectrum Coalition.

The Spectrum Coalition for Public Safety is a national coalition of cities, states, and public safety associations organized to secure additional spectrum in the 700 MHz range to support critical public safety wireless applications. Washington state SIEC joins 13 state and city jurisdictions as well as eight public safety organizations/associations in supporting the Spectrum Coalition.

Issues/Risks

The Spectrum Coalition is asking Congress to enact legislation to mandate the Federal Communication Commission to:

- Stop the pending auctions of the upper portion of the 700 MHz band.
- Allocate 10 MHz of the 700 MHz band to public safety and homeland security use for broadband applications.

- Mandate broadcasters (who must already relocate) do so by a date certain – December 31, 2006 or earlier.
- Provide the implementation of technologies that fully satisfy a series of open-standards technical requirements.

Background

Public safety agencies require additional spectrum to carry out their primary mission—to save lives and to protect property. Unfortunately, current networks or spectrum allocations do not provide sufficient bandwidth to enable critical high-speed, next generation public safety technology. Significant network improvements and spectrum allocations are needed.

There is a solution – allocation by the FCC of at least ten additional MHz of spectrum in the 700 MHz range to be use specifically for public safety services. This additional spectrum could assist the State by increasing the amount of bandwidth available in the public safety band for emergency operations. The window of opportunity for this solution is closing rapidly as the FCC currently plans the auction of the remaining 700 MHz block of spectrum to commercial interests.